

THE COLORADO NRCS CONNECTION



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Insights & Highlights

by
Allen Green



operate and do our jobs. It is important to realize that due to the increase in conservation programs and funding, we must be accountable to utilize programs and available funds as efficiently as possible. We will be under a higher level of scrutiny than at any other time in our history.

You should be aware that in addition to handling the current workload from new and expanded programs, my goal is to assure NRCS in Colorado becomes the strongest technical organization possible.

We will be looking at a variety of options to improve our technical expertise and how we deliver our technical services over the next five plus years. Some of these options may involve a change in how we do business.

I want to personally assure all NRCS employees and our partnerships that any change in how we provide our services will be done with an appreciation of the value of our workforce, our partnership with Districts, and our long standing delivery system.

I want to again thank you for the tremendous efforts that have been put forth to address the resource needs of Colorado. I am excited about the tremendous opportunities ahead and look forward to working with all of you as we move forward.



s I make my rounds visiting various field offices (something I call my personal reality check), I find that my visits with field personnel, have

been the most informative aspect of my travels. The work ethic and commitment to the mission of this agency never ceases to amaze me. Even in these tough times, NRCS and our partners continue to forge ahead working to realize our goals to get sound conservation practices on the land to protect and conserve our natural resources.

You should know that your reputation precedes you. I'm not the only one who sings your praises. It's not uncommon for someone to come to me and testify about your professionalism, expertise, or support.

People are saying good things about you. I, along with our national leadership, realize that you are the foundation of this agency. Internally we are facing many new and unfamiliar pathways, including competitive sourcing. As we begin to engage in the exploration of these realities, it's important not to over-react, act in haste, or lose sight of our everyday responsibilities.

We finally received our FY-2003 allocation recently from Washington. This budget is favorable, and should allow us the means to

Making Changes

by
Zig Ziglar

In today's world of societal and corporate change, job security is a thing of the past. While we must face the fact that change is inevitable, we should also realize that many changes are positive and benefit both individuals and businesses.

Some things you can change and some you can't. You cannot change when you were born, where you were born, how you were born or to whom you were born. It's a fact that if you were born white you will stay white and if you were born black you will remain black. It's a fact that

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on the pulse

Area Office News

Area One

On March 26 the Eagle Field Office in conjunction with the Eagle County Conservation District sponsored a "water awareness" public meeting.

There were approximately 65 people in attendance, ranging from farmers and ranchers to businessmen to government officials to homeowners' associations. The meeting focused attention on this past year's drought as well as future planning.

Several members of the Glenwood Springs field office participated in a five-week workshop entitled "Quality Living on Your Rural Land" targeted to new and small acreage landowners. The first week **Dennis Davidson**, District Conservationist discussed soils; the second week **Mike Kishimoto**, Soil Con. Tech, discussed irrigation water management; the third week the explored plant growth while others discussed proper weed control and the West Nile Virus.

Construction continues with the Stirling Group structure and pipelines, funded through the EQIP program. This project has been difficult due to soil conditions, change of contractor, and working with many different landowners.

Colorado Connection

The Glenwood Springs field office completed snow surveys on March 28. The overall precipitation was about average except for the Roaring Fork drainage that is still reading approximately 85%.

Regretfully, **Dee and Jean Blue** of Carbondale announced their retirement from the board of supervisors for the Mount Sopris Conservation District. Between the two of them, they served over 56 years on the board. Jean served as president, secretary and treasurer as well as various other positions over the years.

Dee also served in numerous positions on the board, as well as serving on the State Soil Conservation Board. Her foremost interest has always been conservation education.

John Murray, NRCS, Range Conservationist has been working in cooperation with CSU Extension Service and BLM on range workshops dealing with management of rangelands during a drought. He has participated in four workshops that have reached over 300 rangeland users.

Steve Woodis, NRCS, Wildlife Biologist, is working with the State Park Service on a Bio-Engineering workshop. They will be treating a portion of the

Uncompahgre River with pole plantings and other vegetative work.

John Murray, NRCS Range Conservationist is working with a local producer on a drip irrigation demonstration project on onions. They will be using underground drip tape to deliver the water to the plant. A portable pump, filter and manifold system will be used to determine the possibility of using this equipment on several different fields instead of on one field.

Area Three



In the past two months the Rocky Ford and Springfield field offices have welcomed detailees to help with their drought EQIP workload. **Robert Killian**, Area Rangeland Mgmt. Specialist, **Josh Saunders**, Range Specialist, **Ben Berlinger**, Area Rangeland Mgmt. Specialist, **Herman Garcia**, State Range Conservationist, assisted the

Rocky Ford staff. Garcia, Berlinger, Rangeland Mgmt. Specialists **Paulette Balliette**, **Debbi Heeney**, **Paul Billig**, and **Lars Santana**, assisted the Springfield staff.

Scott Woodall, District Conservationist Burlington FO, worked with CSU Cooperative Extension, and Colorado Division of Wildlife to bring an Earth Day program to the Bethune school district. Woodall and other presenters taught grades K-12 the importance of natural resource management.

The Colorado Springs FO participated in Farm Day with the local Farm Bureau. Approximately 300 K-6 graders will learn about agriculture and be able to visit farm animals in a petting zoo.

Various Area 3 staffers from the Pueblo RC&D office, Pueblo FO, and La Junta AO participated in the Pueblo Children's Water Festival held at CSU Pueblo.

The Eads FO assisted with the planning, design and installation of a 1,940-foot living snowfence located northwest of Eads. Thirty individuals, including the Kiowa County Commissioners, county employees, Town of Eads, Eads FFA, local 4-H clubs, Colorado State Forest Service, CSU Cooperative Extension, Rebekah Lodge, NRCS, and local citizens worked on the planting. The Colorado Division of Wildlife, Kiowa County, Colorado State Forest Service, Kiowa County Conservation District, Town of Eads, and local producers provided equipment and materials for the project.

Marvin Watson, District Conservationist, and **Ben Berlinger**, Area Rangeland Management Specialist, represented NRCS at the Sand Creek Historic Site Resource Meeting.

A variety of resource specialists and private consultants discussed how they could assist to manage the existing resource and try to move them toward historic conditions. Local landowners, local officials as well as tribal representatives from the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Tribes of Oklahoma, Northern Arapahoe, and Southern Traditional Sand Creek Cheyenne descendants gave input to try to determine resource conditions as they existed in 1864.

Area Four



Members of the Cortez Field Office participated in the annual Children's Water Festival. About 500 fifth graders from the Four Corners area attended the Festival. **Tim Ouellette**, District Conservationist, **Mike Rich**, Soil Conservationist, **Steve Myers**, Rangeland Mgmt. Specialist, **Bob Fuller**, Wildlife Biologist, **Roseanna Leos**, Ag. Engineer, and **Cindy Crist**, Soil Conservation Technician involved the children in learning activities utilizing the watershed trailer.



The Center NRCS Field Office has started a bioengineer-

ing streambank project on La Garita and Canero Creeks. Future plans are to have projects on Saguache and San Luis Creeks. This project is designed to protect erosive streambanks. The landowners plan on doing projects each year, and new landowners are calling to set up additional projects up and down La Garita Creek. The willows are harvested in mid-April before bud stage and planted each year. Rock wiers are placed in creeks to stabilize creek flow and to stop erosion. Cooperation between landowners, NRCS, BLM, Forest Service, and CDOW is making these projects a success.

Center CD had their 59th Annual Meeting. **Tracy Miller**, District Conservationist gave two PowerPoint presentations of 2002 conservation practices and Conservationist of the Year (Jand J Farms). J and J Farms won the SWCS award back at the CACD meeting in November. Awards were given to the 6th grade poster winners, and everyone enjoyed live entertainment from Dennis Webster.

The Cortez Field Office and the Colorado State Forest Service, along with the Dolores and Mancos Conservation Districts, manned a shared booth at the Four Corners AgExpo. About 7,500 people attended the AgExpo. There was a special demonstration of PAM at the booth.

Mike Rich, Soil Conservationist presented the conservation provision of the new Farm Bill to participants of the Dolores Conservation District's annual meeting.



Allen Green addressing group regarding his vision for RC&D program

Colorado League of RC&Ds holds Spring

Training/Meeting In Colorado Springs

The Colorado League of RC&Ds held their annual spring training and annual meeting in Colorado Springs on April 3-4. Shelli Bischoff, with Conservation Impact, assisted the fifty-plus registrants in developing a practical marketing plan to increase the visibility and recognition of their local RC&D councils. Cathy O. Robbins, Executive Director of Chamber Nonprofit Partnership, reinforced the principles for "Building Effective Boards."

Allen Green, USDA Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, spoke to the group at the Thursday evening dinner. He emphasized the importance of each RC&D Councils' contributions to their area. He encouraged all council members to continue their excellent work and reinforced the continued support of the NRCS. Following Green, a member of each council enlightened the audience about the projects they are working on in their local area. Closing the dinner meeting, Lewis Frank, USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, expressed his pleasure

you cannot change a single event that has already happened. You can't change one whisper yesterday. Tomorrow, however, is an entirely different matter. If you're willing to change your thinking today, you can change your life and your living to make your tomorrows better and brighter.

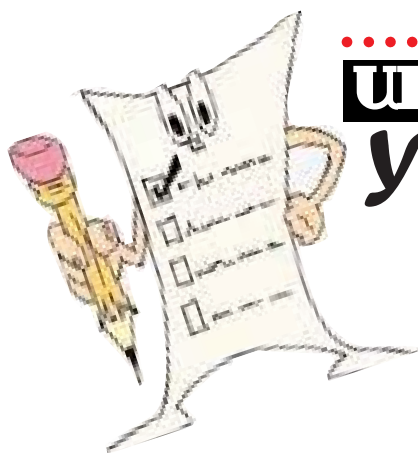
Example

As a student at Yazoo City High School in Mississippi, table tennis was one of my favorite sports. Frankly, I could beat most of my buddies at that particular sport. Then a new kid came to town and he beat me regularly. I was using the old three-finger grip; he was using the new "handshake" grip. I felt that I was playing as well as I could with the grip I was using so I changed to the "handshake" grip. Initial results were disastrous. My buddies beat me like a drum. But after a couple of weeks I started winning and eventually was able to beat the "new kid in town." I'm convinced there was no way I could have done that without changing my grip, though I actually got worse at first.

Message

Analyze your situation. Have you gone as far as you can go and are you doing as well as you can with present procedures? If so, don't be afraid to take two steps back if it will enable you to move three steps forward. Make those changes and I'll SEE YOU AT THE TOP!

Adapted from Zig Ziglar's book, "SOMETHING ELSE TO SMILE ABOUT," published by Thomas Nelson.



UP AND COMING
**You may want
to jot this
down**

CAFO Mtg. Greeley -----May 5-6
Area 2 AO/DC Meeting -----May 5-7
NP Lead. Team Mtg. -----May 7-8
NRCS GPS Trng. -----May 8 - 9
Farm Bill Anniversary-----May 13
Area 3 Cul. Res. Trng. -----May 13-15
Delta AFO/CAFO Mtg. -----May-15

Colorado Lead. Telecon.----May-22
Am. Indian/Ak. Native
Employees Assoc. -----June 9-13
Lamar AFO/CAFO Mtg. --June-10
NOPHNRCS Conf. -----June 17-19
Area 3 ArcView Trng. -----July 15-16
Area 4 WRP Trng. -----July 29-31

Welcome

Frank Riggle



Frank Riggle assumes a new leadership position in Colorado as the Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources. Riggle isn't new to the state. He served in many capacities within Colorado for 17 years, eventually holding the district conservationist position in the Greeley field office before moving to Wyoming where he served as the State Resources Conservationist.

Riggle and wife Becky are Minnesota natives and both graduated from the University of Minnesota. He started his career with SCS/NRCS in Utah in 1978 as a soil scientist. He then moved on to serve as a soils specialist as well as an IWM specialist on the Colorado River Salinity Control Projects. Upon leaving Utah, Riggle came to Colorado and during the years here he worked in Wray, Grand Junction, Fort Collins and, of course, Greeley.

Randy Randall



Randy Randall was recently appointed as Colorado's newest Assistant State Conservationist for Operations. Randall comes to the state office after serving as the NRCS Natural Resource Consultant to the Western Governors' Association where his emphasis was on chronic wasting disease issues, endangered species, open lands, the farm bill and rural economic issues.

Randall is a Colorado native and a graduate of Metro State College. Shortly after receiving his degree in biology, he enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces and continues to rise in ranks. He is a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Reserves and serves as the Headquarters Company Commander for the 651st Area Support Group.

Randall joined NRCS in 1992 as a biologist and continued in that capacity until 2000 whereupon he was selected for the Natural Resources Consultant position.

NRCS HOSTS WORKSHOPS TO HELP LANDOWNERS COMBAT DROUGHT

Colorado is still grappling with the effects of the worst drought conditions the state has seen in a century. To help landowners combat the devastating effects of this drought, NRCS along with various Conservation Districts hosted a series of workshops; the latest were this past March and April in the southern portion of the state.

"Recovery will take years," says Herman Garcia, NRCS State Range Conservationist, Lakewood, Colorado. "However, there are more effective ways to recover than others. That's where we come in. We were out there visiting one-on-one with landowners to provide technical assistance to those directly affected, to help reduce their recovery time, make the results of their recovery time more effective, and finally to recommend practices that will help mitigate future drought conditions."

NRCS has always recommended alternative grazing systems. Those landowners who employed NRCS' recommendations were found to have not experienced as much devastation as a result of the drought. These alternative systems include multiple pasture rotations and seasonal deferments.

NRCS technical specialists spent on average a half day with each individual landowner out in the field surveying the effects of drought on their plant communities. *"There were many surprises," Garcia went on to say. "In addition to the devastation, landowners were privy to opportunities created by the drought."*

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NATIONALLY SPEAKING

NRCS Receives Organizational Leadership Award



NRCS Chief Bruce Knight (center); Kathy Gugulis, NRCS Deputy Chief for Planning and Accountability; and presenter John Kamensky, member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Accountability.

On April 3, 2003, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that the *Natural Resources Conservation Service* has been recognized by the American Society at the Society's 64th National Conference in Washington, D.C. for Public Administration (ASPA) for increasing public access and demonstrating greater financial accountability.

This is the first time ASPA's Center for Accountability and Performance has presented its organizational leadership award to a Federal agency.

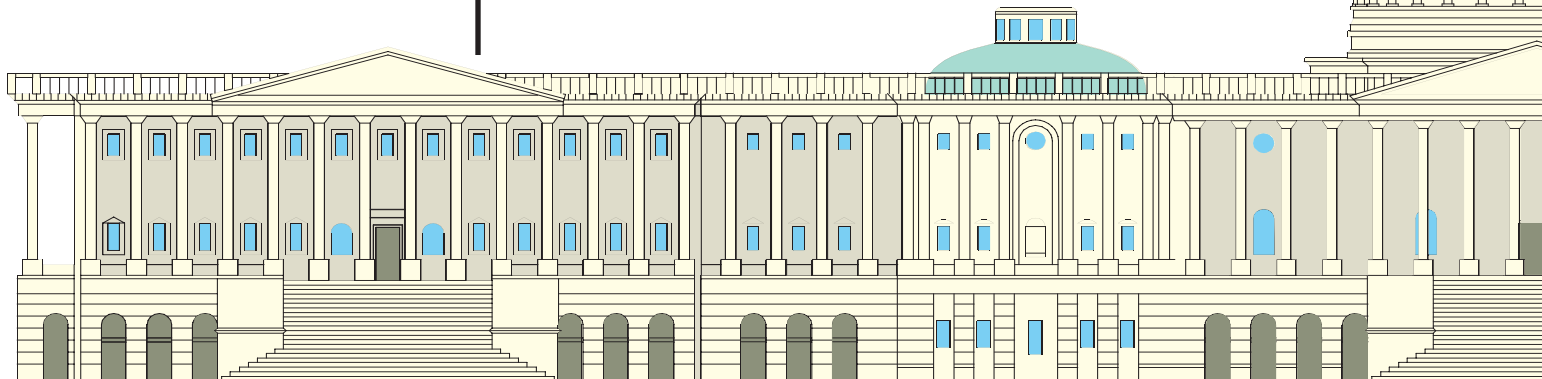
USDA Signs Technical Service Provider Agreement with University of Tennessee



Observing the key signatories, Dr. Jack Britt, vice president, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee (UT), and Bruce Knight, NRCS Chief, are the following individuals in the back row (l to r) – Dr. Gary Cunningham, CSREES Associate Administrator; James Ford, NRCS State Conservationist, Tennessee; Dr. Charles Norman, Dean, UT Agricultural Extension Service; and Dr. Robert Burns, designated technical leader, UT Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Certification Program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a cooperative partnership with the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service (UT-Extension) that will offer producers options in developing their comprehensive nutrient management plans. This is USDA's first agreement that recognizes a university's comprehensive nutrient management plan certification program as a source for technical service providers.

The three-year agreement allows UT-Extension to recommend certified nutrient management specialists in manure and wastewater handling and storage, nutrient management and land treatment practices as USDA technical service providers. These providers must perform work that meets USDA standards and specifications for effective nutrient management.



Secretary of Agriculture Veneman Marks Earth Day by Announcing CRP Signup Begins May 5

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized USDA to maintain CRP enrollment up to 39.2 million acres. Aside from the general sign-up, CRP's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing. USDA has reserved two million acres for the continuous sign-up program, which represents the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land.

USDA is making a special effort to help enhance wildlife habitats and air quality by setting aside 500,000 acres for bottomland hardwood tree planting. The continuous sign-up for hardwood planting will start after the general sign-up.

USDA Appoints Agricultural Air Quality Task Force Members

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the members of the recently re-established Agricultural Air Quality Task Force for 2003-2004. The task force is chaired by the **Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation**

Service (NRCS) and is made up of USDA employees, industry representatives and other experts in the fields of agriculture and air quality.

The task force will serve as an advisory committee and will operate under the terms of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The role of the task force is to advise the Secretary on issues related to agricultural air quality, including strengthening and coordinating USDA air quality research efforts and identifying cost-effective ways in which the agriculture industry can improve air quality.

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force charter is renewed every two years to address agricultural air quality issues.

NRCS Names National Earth Team Award Winners

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recognized Earth Team volunteerism with national awards for volunteers and employees at the National Association of Conservation District's 57th annual conference.



In fiscal year 2002, more than **38,000 Earth Team volunteers donated more than one million hours to conservation**. Their contributions were valued at more than **\$17 million**.

During an awards luncheon, Knight presented the **Fremont Conservation District** in Canon City, Colo., with the national Earth Team Award for demonstrating, shared leadership among conservation district officials, NRCS employees and Earth Team volunteers.

Fremont Conservation District Earth Team volunteers logged **975 hours** during fiscal year 2002. 77 of those volunteers worked on fire rehabilitation efforts at the Iron Mountain Fire Site near Canon City, where more than 4,000 acres of land burned. They also completed several conservation education and information activities, including a weed identification tour and an alfalfa workshop.

A WORD FROM OUR PARTNERS

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts Colorado State Conservation Board

C A C UPDATE



**Callie
Hendrickson
Executive
Vice President**

AFO/CAFO Seminars - CACD is working with Colo. Livestock Association to coordinate four to six seminars across the state on AFO/CAFO rulings. Callie attended an EPA/State Health Dept. meeting on March 14th where the EPA and State Health Department presented the new regulations and the State's process for updating their rules.

Seminar Dates are as follows:

- 1-April 30 - Burlington
- 2-May 6 - Greeley
- 3-May 15 - Delta
- 4-June 10 - Lamar

CACD office will be administering funds for the Polyacrylamide (PAM) Seminars across the state. **A notice has been sent to all districts notifying them of the funding assistance for the seminars.** The applications must be received in the CACD office by **May 30, 2003**. Districts will be notified of funding approval by June 15, 2003.

CACD office will be coordinating a series of legislative tours. Bridging-the-Headgate funds are available to assist with this effort. Assistance from board members will be needed to make these successful.

C S ACTION B



**Robert Zebroski
Director**

The "Long Bill" which contains the funding for the State of Colorado for the next fiscal year was introduced in the Senate on April 1. We do not expect any changes in the recommendations for the State Board and districts.

Pam King and I attended the quarterly meeting of the Upper South Platte Watershed meeting in Fort Lupton. Several of the districts are sponsoring workshops addressing the disposal of animal carcasses.

The Sedgwick County CD is exploring the possibility of conducting an election in November of this year for the purpose of DeTaboring their budget. Also they may be adding the question to the ballot to remove term limits for the Board.

Iwas the guest speaker at the annual meeting of the Bent CD. They had a successful meeting with approximately 90 in attendance. The District has prepared an excellent PowerPoint presentation on their outstanding cooperators.

We are pleased to welcome Janette Terry as our Program Assistant. She began April 1st.

Drought Assistance con't.

As good plant species suffered and died, so did undesirable species that typically called for harsh chemicals or mechanical methods to be used to destroy them. *"The most notable change in the landscape was the space created between the patches of blue grama,"* Garcia further states. *"This grass was being suffocated because many ranches were inundated with one of the regions most destructive weeds, the broom snake-weed. But as a result of the drought, the snake weed simply died, which is a really good thing."*

NRCS officials are now observing that the bottle brush squirrel-tail grass and western wheat grass are taking the weed's place. These grasses are far more desirable. Snake-weed is toxic to animals causing abortions or causing offspring of livestock that consumed the weed to be light in weight and lacking in performance. This weed also inhibits other plant growth under its canopy.

"The drought has ruined many of us and has greatly inhibited most other ranchers," one landowner states. *"It was not only great to have the one-on-one attention, but even better to have the attention from those who knew our situation because they live and work in our communities. They also knew that we didn't just want a buy-out, but some suggested steps to help us restore our land, which is our livelihood, and who knew exactly what to do to help us do just that."*

Landowners were pleased overall with the direct assistance, however, they noted that in order to incorporate the recommended practices, additional resources will be needed to successfully employ them.